

Taking a Bite of the PA Core Standards



Focus on Informational Text



Today's "bite": A Closer Look at Text Complexity

Today's Agenda

- **What** is text complexity?
- **Why** does text complexity matter?

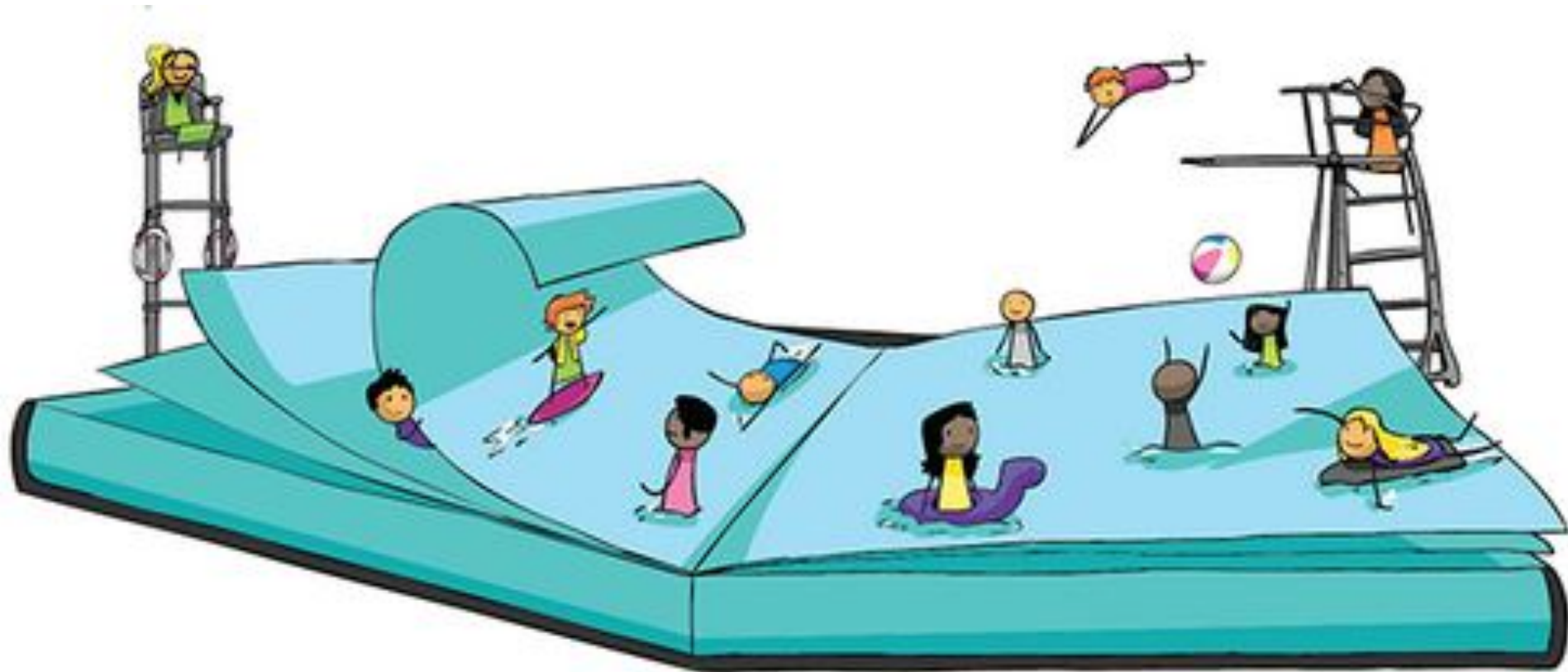


Today's Learning Targets:

- ◎ I CAN describe the attributes of text complexity.
- ◎ I CAN identify the characteristics of high-quality text dependent questions to engage my students in close reading of complex text.

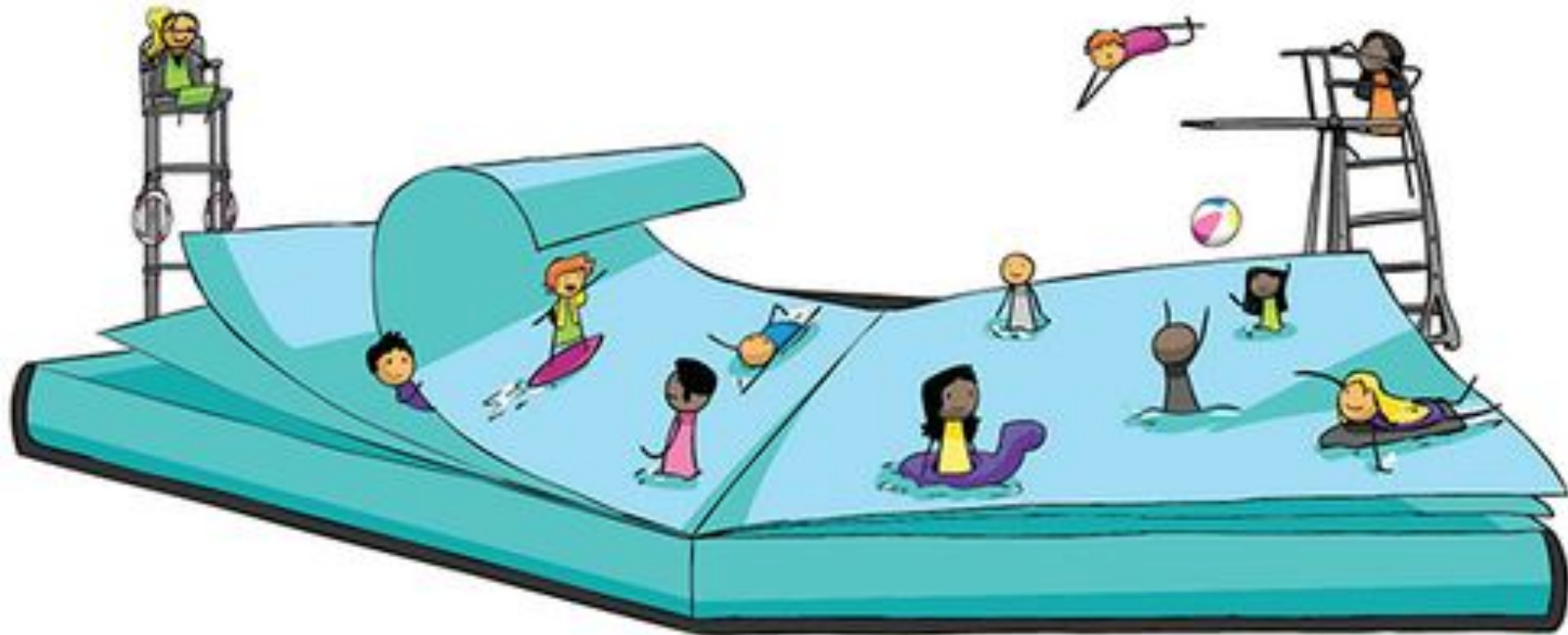
Examine the five questions.

- Put them into two piles based upon their degree of complexity. SHALLOW OR DEEP?



Examine the five questions.

- Put them into two piles based upon their degree of complexity. SHALLOW OR DEEP?
- Identify which questions are “text-dependent.”



Teach students to



read like detectives...

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...with texts that provide opportunities for deep thinking.

"Just as rigor does not reside in the barbell but in the act of lifting it, rigor in reading is not an attribute of a text but rather of a reader's behavior -- engaged, observant, responsive, questioning, analytical."

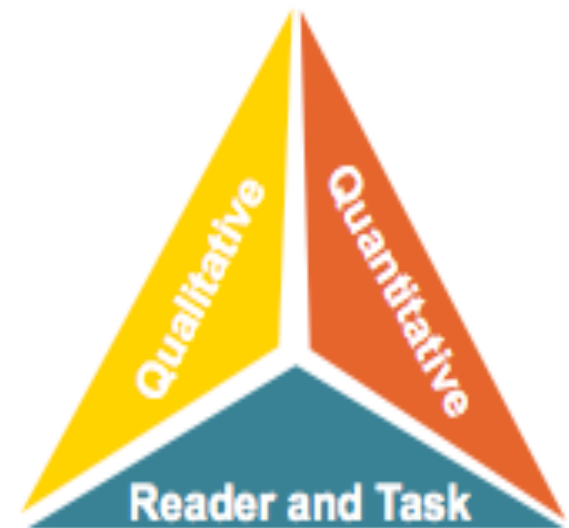
[Kylene Beers and Robert E. Probst]

How is text complexity measured?

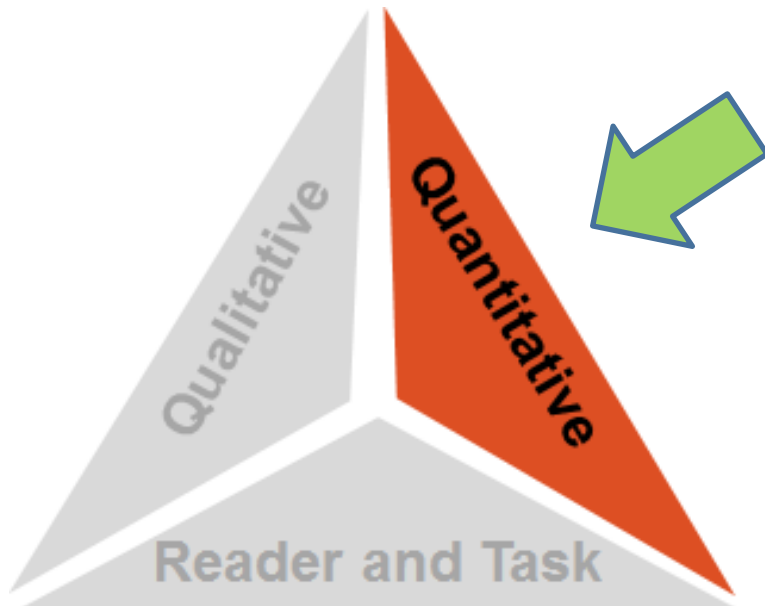
Qualitative measures – levels of meaning, structure, language conventionality and clarity, and knowledge demands

Quantitative measures – readability and other scores of text complexity

Reader and Task – background knowledge of reader, motivation, interests, and complexity generated by tasks assigned



Quantitative Measures



Measures such as:

- Word length
- Word frequency
- Word difficulty
- Sentence length
- Text length
- Text cohesion

Trying it out...an example

Apply Fry's availability formula to the following passage to determine the readability level of The Hunger Games by Suzanne Collins.

- Count the number of sentences per 100 words.
- Count the number of syllables per 100 words.



The boy from District 1 dies before he can pull out the spear. My arrow drives deeply into the center of his neck. He falls to his knees and halves the brief remainder of his life by yanking out the arrow and drowning in his own blood. Rue has rolled to her side, her body curved in and around the spear. I shove the boy away from the net. One look at the wound and I know it's far beyond my capacity to heal. The spearhead is buried up to the shaft in her stomach.

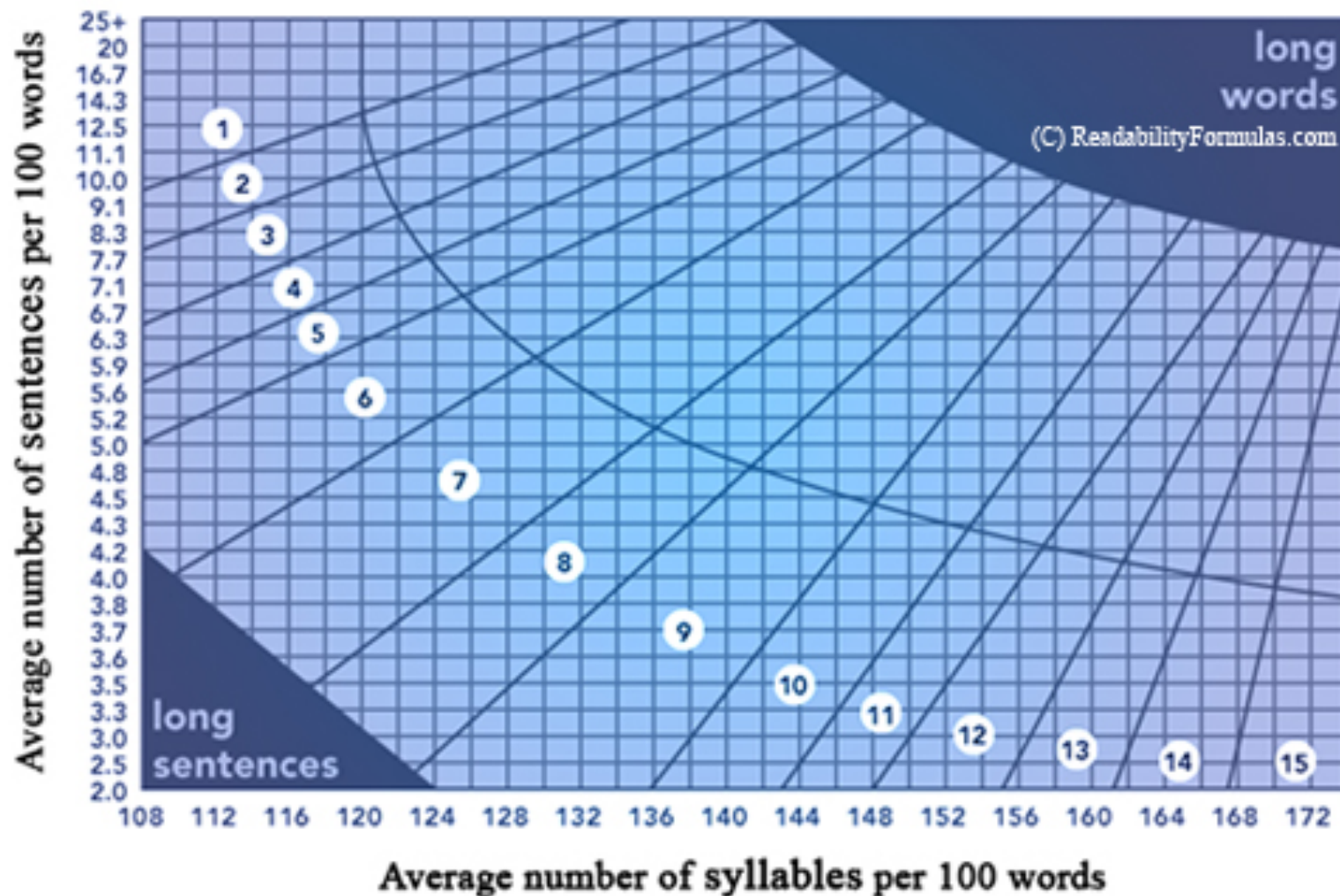
Impulsively I lean forward and kiss him, stopping his words. This is probably overdue anyway since he's right, we are supposed to be madly in love. It's the first time I've ever kissed a boy.

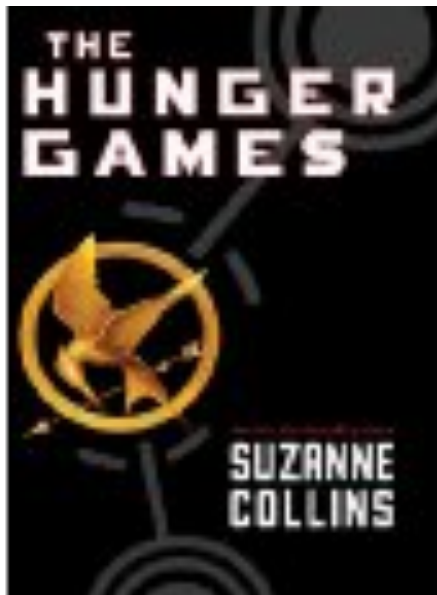
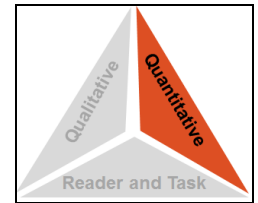
"Well, there's more swelling, but the pus is gone," I say in an unsteady voice.

"I know what blood poisoning is, Katniss," says Peeta.

Quantitative: Fry's Readability Formula

Fry Graph for estimating Reading Ages (grade level)

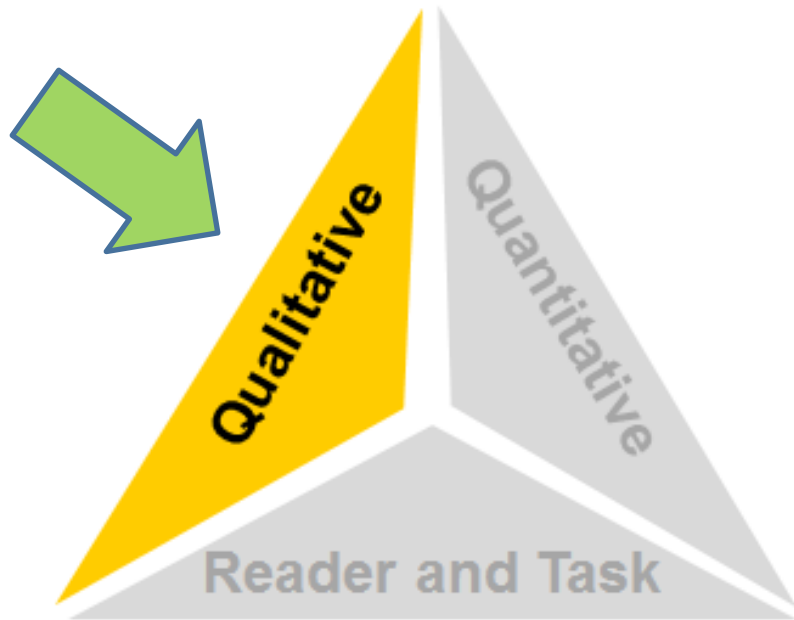




Lexile Range (810 L): **4-5**

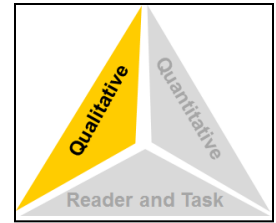
Scholastic's
Book Wizard Level: **5.3**

Qualitative Measures

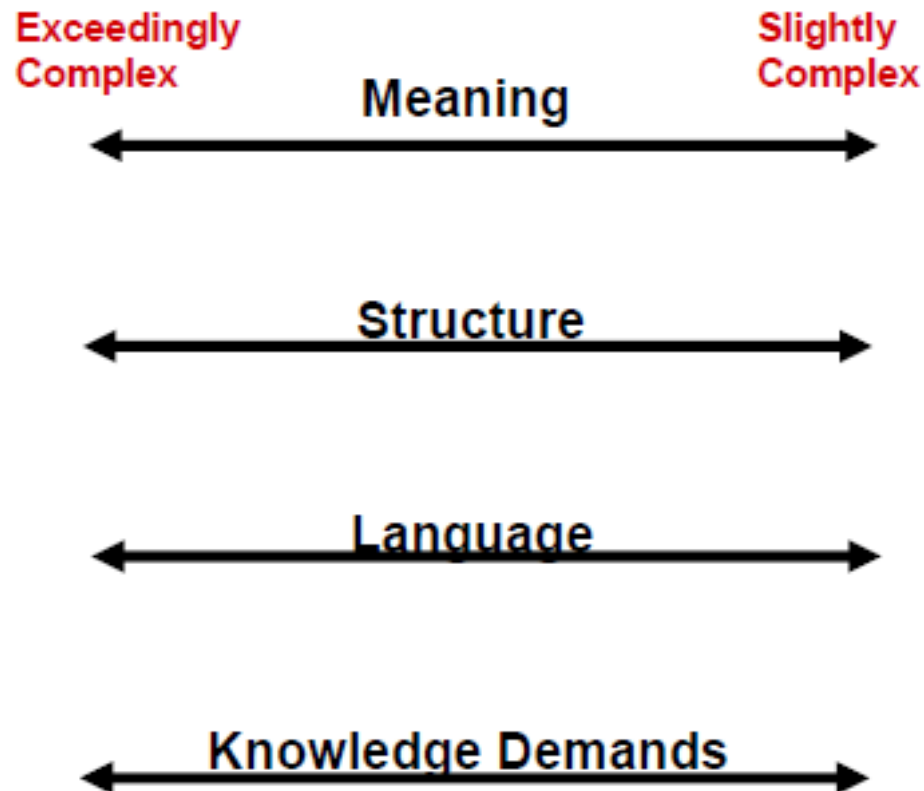


Measures such as:

- Layers of meaning
- Levels of purpose
- Structure
- Organization
- Language conventionality
- Language clarity
- Prior knowledge demands
- Cultural demands
- Vocabulary



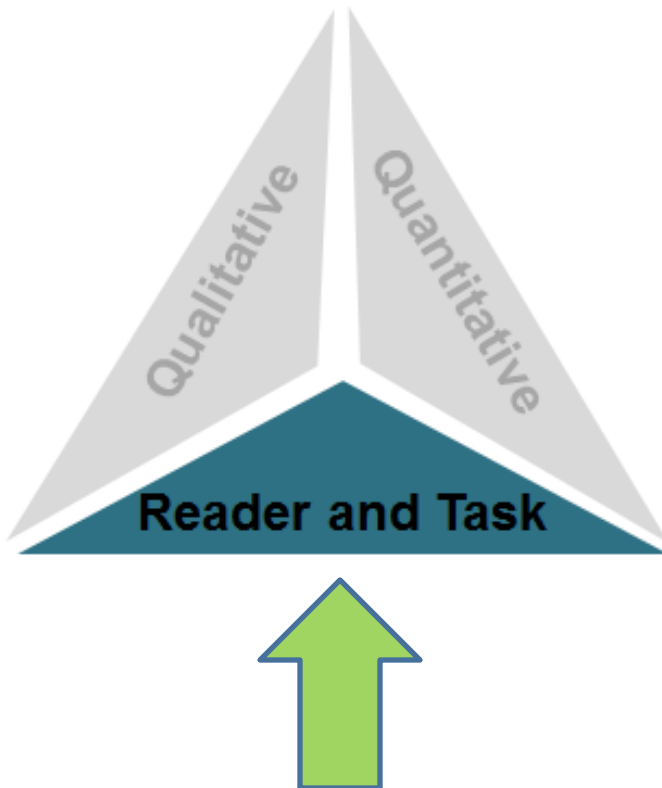
Where on the continuum is The Hunger Games?



	Exceedingly Complex	Very Complex	Moderately Complex	Slightly Complex
TEXT STRUCTURE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Organization: Is intricate with regard to such elements as point of view, time shifts, multiple characters, storylines and detail ○ Use of Graphics: If used, illustrations or graphics are essential for understanding the meaning of the text 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Organization: May include subplots, time shifts and more complex characters ○ Use of Graphics: If used, illustrations or graphics support or extend the meaning of the text 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Organization: May have two or more storylines and occasionally be difficult to predict ○ Use of Graphics: If used, a range of illustrations or graphics support selected parts of the text 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Organization: Is clear, chronological or easy to predict ○ Use of Graphics: If used, either illustrations directly support and assist in interpreting the text or are not necessary to understanding the meaning of the text
LANGUAGE FEATURES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Conventionality: Dense and complex; contains abstract, ironic, and/or figurative language ○ Vocabulary: Complex, generally unfamiliar, archaic, subject-specific, or overly academic language; may be ambiguous or purposefully misleading ○ Sentence Structure: Mainly complex sentences with several subordinate clauses or phrases; sentences often contain multiple concepts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Conventionality: Fairly complex; contains some abstract, ironic, and/or figurative language ○ Vocabulary: Fairly complex language that is sometimes unfamiliar, archaic, subject-specific, or overly academic ○ Sentence Structure: Many complex sentences with several subordinate phrases or clauses and transition words 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Conventionality: Largely explicit and easy to understand with some occasions for more complex meaning ○ Vocabulary: Mostly contemporary, familiar, conversational; rarely unfamiliar or overly academic ○ Sentence Structure: Primarily simple and compound sentences, with some complex constructions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Conventionality: Explicit, literal, straightforward, easy to understand ○ Vocabulary: Contemporary, familiar, conversational language ○ Sentence Structure: Mainly simple sentences
MEANING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Meaning: Multiple competing levels of meaning that are difficult to identify, separate, and interpret; theme is implicit or subtle, often ambiguous and revealed over the entirety of the text 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Meaning: Multiple levels of meaning that may be difficult to identify or separate; theme is implicit or subtle and may be revealed over the entirety of the text 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Meaning: Multiple levels of meaning clearly distinguished from each other; theme is clear but may be conveyed with some subtlety 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Meaning: One level of meaning; theme is obvious and revealed early in the text.
KNOWLEDGE DEMANDS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Life Experiences: Explores complex, sophisticated or abstract themes; experiences portrayed are distinctly different from the common reader ○ Intertextuality and Cultural Knowledge: Many references or allusions to other texts or cultural elements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Life Experiences: Explores themes of varying levels of complexity or abstraction; experiences portrayed are uncommon to most readers ○ Intertextuality and Cultural Knowledge: Some references or allusions to other texts or cultural elements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Life Experiences: Explores several themes; experiences portrayed are common to many readers ○ Intertextuality and Cultural Knowledge: Few references or allusions to other texts or cultural elements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Life Experiences: Explores a single theme; experiences portrayed are everyday and common to most readers ○ Intertextuality and Cultural Knowledge: No references or allusions to other texts or cultural elements

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Reader and Task

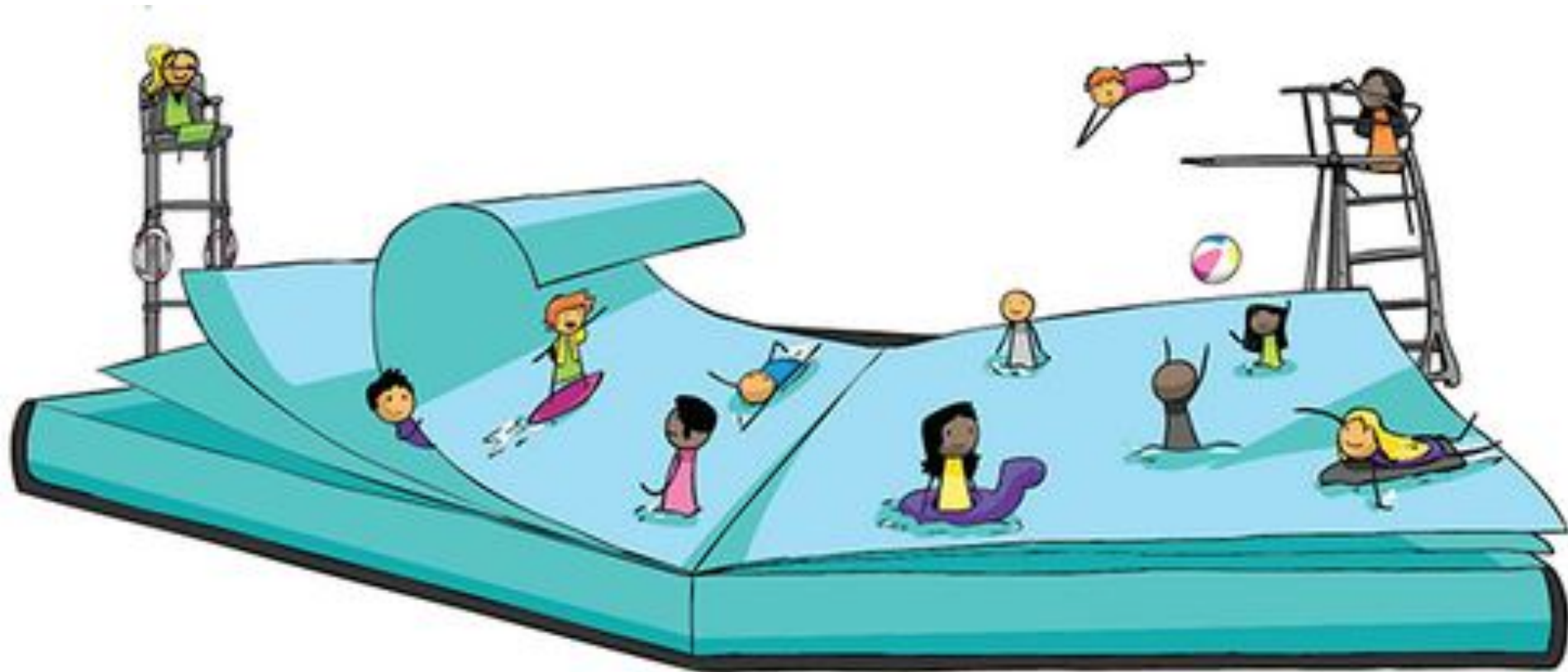


Considerations such as:

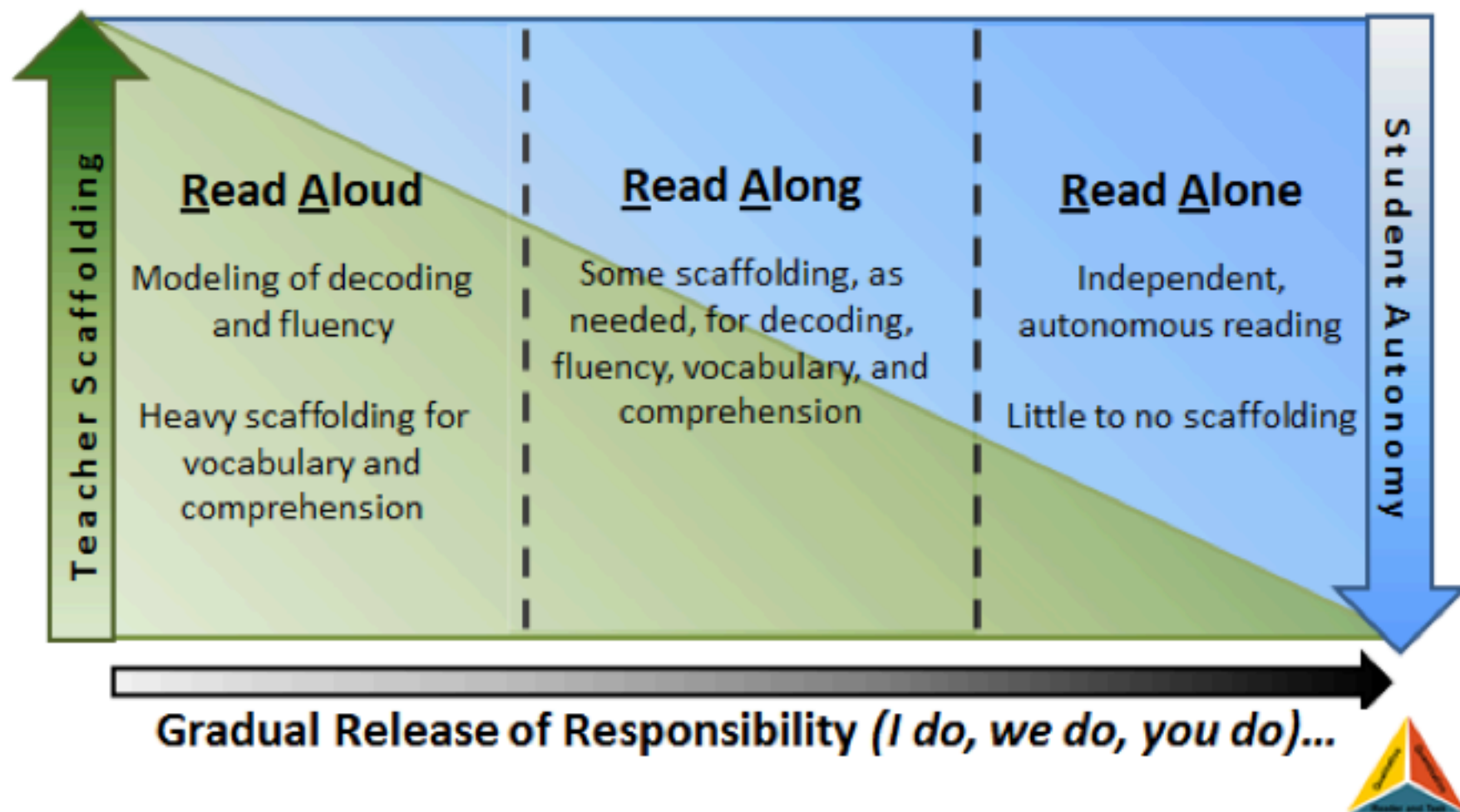
- Motivation
- Knowledge and experience
- Purpose for reading
- Complexity of task regarding text
- Complexity of questions asked regarding text

Students need to engage with:

- Age/grade appropriate materials for exposure to structures, content, vocabulary
- Instructional level materials that allow them to progress
- “Easy” materials that allow them to practice



RA! RA! RA! Reading!



Keep in mind...

- Just because a “level” matches a child’s ability, doesn’t mean that the book will.
- Know your students well.
- The way students engage in the text impacts complexity.
- Learning targets are crucial in determining the relationship between the reader and the task.
- Begin with what you already have.
- Plan ways to “dial up.” Plan ways to scaffold.



**High-quality questions
help students read
complex text...**

WHY Text-Dependent Questions?

- More instructional time spent outside the text means less time inside the text.
- Departing from the text in classroom discussion privileges only those who already have experience with the topic.
- It is “easier” to talk about our experiences than to analyze the text — especially for students reluctant to engage with reading.

Text-Dependent Questions Are...

- Questions that can *only* be answered with _____ from the text.
- Sometimes literal, but **mostly inferential**.
- Focused on word, sentence, and paragraph, as well as larger ideas, themes, or events.
- Focused on difficult portions of text in order to enhance reading proficiency.
- May be prompts for writing.

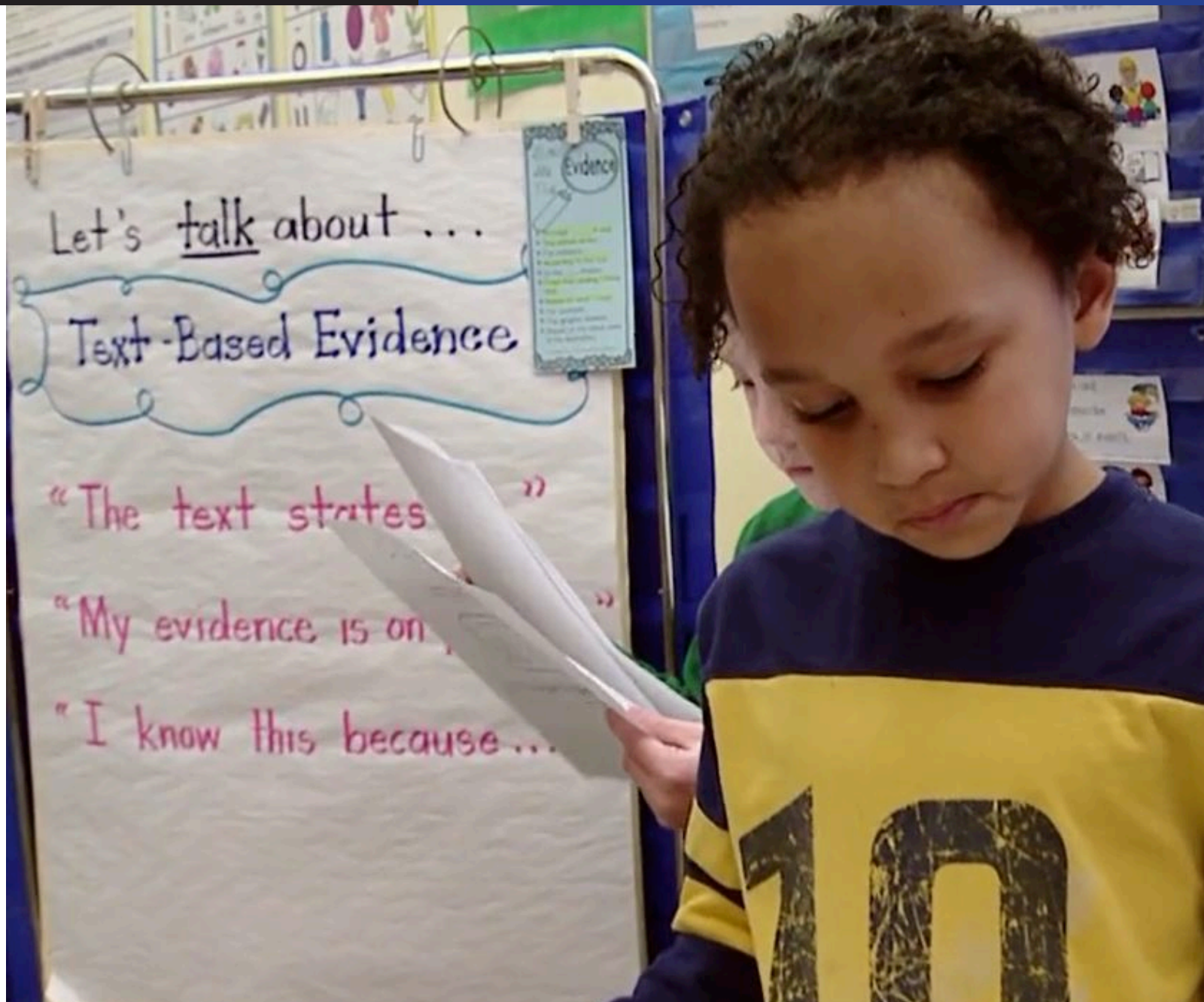
Read like a detective...

How do you know?

Explain your thinking.

What is the evidence?







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REFLECTION

Know what?

So what?

Now what?

